

**METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR STREAMING MEDIA DATA IN
HETEROGENEOUS ENVIRONMENTS**

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A B S T R A C T

The present invention discloses a new method and system for streaming media data in a heterogeneous network environment. In addition to existing standard streaming products, e.g. standard Media Player and Stream Server, a *Stream Server Portal* which controls a set of Stream Servers is provided by the present invention. The Stream Server Portal offers a service called *prepareStreaming* to applications which returns the streaming meta data necessary to initiate streaming for given media instances.

15 The Stream Server Portal enables generation of streaming meta data necessary to initiate streaming on the fly as part of executing a *prepareStreaming* request. This completely removes the need to store and maintain the streaming streaming meta data and solves the problems associated with it. Furthermore, the

20 Stream Server Portal allows transfer of media data to a stream server machine transparently as part of executing a *prepareStreaming* request. This removes the constraint of maintaining media data on the same machine as the stream server software and solves the problems this creates for certain server

25 platforms. The Stream Server Portal can minimize additional network traffic by maintaining a cache of media data already transferred. The Stream Server Portal also allows a choice among available stream servers, to stream a particular media as part of executing a *prepareStreaming* request. This removes the need

30 for companies to maintain proprietary stream server software, as the Stream Server Portal shields the application requiring streaming from knowing the specifics about, and from storing and maintaining streaming meta data. A preferred embodiment of the present invention discloses the use of an additional Stream

35 Server Controller when the Stream Server Portal may choose among several Stream Servers.